

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

LAND USE SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DISPOSITIONS AND
CONCESSIONS

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June 1, 2010
Start: 1:10 pm
Recess: 1:45 pm

HELD AT: 250 Broadway
Hearing Room, 16th Floor

B E F O R E: Steven T. Levin
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Charles Barron
Inez Dickens
Sara M. Gonzalez
Peter A. Koo

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Carol Clark
Assistant Commissioner
NYC HPD

Sister Janet Kinney
Providence House Inc.

Jack Hammer
Director
North Brooklyn Planning

Evans Collins
Resident
Spirits of Fire Tenants Association

Ted Weinstein
Director
Bronx Planning

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good afternoon,
3 everybody. My name is council member Steve Levin
4 and welcome to the Subcommittee on Planning,
5 Dispositions and Concessions. We have number,
6 1,2,3,4,5,6 items on the agenda today. Beginning
7 with Land Use number 107 and 108, Providence House
8 2, that's in Brooklyn Community Board district 3
9 and council district 36, that's the council
10 district represented by council member Al Vann.
11 Number is C100155HAK and C100156ZSK. It's an
12 application from the Department of Housing
13 Preservation and Development regarding a UDAP and
14 dispositional property selected, to a developer
15 selected by HPD to facilitate development of a six
16 story building tentatively known as Providence
17 House 2 with approximately 45 units to be
18 developed under the Department of Housing
19 Preservations and Development's supportive housing
20 loan program.

21 And the second land use number 108
22 is an application submitted by HPD pursuant to
23 section 197c and 201 of the New York City charter
24 for grant of a special permit pursuant to section
25 74-902 the zoning resolution to permit the

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2 allowable community facility floor area under
3 section 24-11, the maximum floor ratio to apply to
4 a proposed six story community facility with
5 sleeping accommodations on property located at
6 273-277 Kosciusko Street in an R6 district.

7 Here testifying on behalf of HPD is
8 Assistant Commissioner Carol Clark and Jack
9 Hammer, the Director of Brooklyn Planning, as well
10 as Sister Janet Kinney. Miss Clark?

11 CAROL CLARK: Good afternoon Mr.
12 Chairman and members of the committee. LU 107
13 consisted of the proposed disposition of three
14 vacant city owned lots located as you noted at
15 273-277 Kosciusko Street through HPD's supportive
16 housing loan program.

17 Under the proposed project, the
18 sponsor, Providence House Inc. will construct a
19 six story building containing 45 dwelling units
20 plus one superintendent's unit. There will be
21 1,200 square feet of common space on the first
22 floor, and approximately 2,800 square feet of
23 outdoor recreational space. The units will be
24 affordable to low income individuals or formerly
25 homeless families. Providence house will provide

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2 requisite social services to the buildings
3 residents.

4 As you noted 108 is a request for a
5 special permit to allow the community facility
6 floor area ratio to apply to the proposed six
7 story building. Council member Vann has been
8 briefed and indicated his support and now Sister
9 Jane Kinney will speak about Providence House and
10 this project.

11 SISTER JANET KINNEY: Good
12 afternoon and thank you for this opportunity.
13 Providence House is a non-profit organization that
14 was founded by my congregation, the Sisters of
15 Saint Joseph in 1979 and our founding mission was
16 to help women coming out of prison transition back
17 into the community. We've since expanded from
18 that original mission to also serving women who
19 are homeless, women whose families, you know, also
20 accompany them and we are at this point, 31 years
21 old, a provider of both transitional and permanent
22 supportive housing in the boroughs of Brooklyn and
23 Queens as well as in Westchester County. We have
24 ten residential programs. We've been a presence
25 in Bedford Stuyvesant since 1982 and our main

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2 administrative offices are also located in Bedford
3 Stuyvesant.

4 Our reason for getting into the
5 development of supportive permanent housing is
6 because the great need that we have seen firsthand
7 for the population we wish to serve at this
8 project. Homeless women with a history of
9 incarceration who have some type of disability
10 whether it be mental health issues, or whether it
11 be substance abuse.

12 We have had great success with this
13 population, a less than 5% recidivism rate and if
14 you know anything about recidivism rates you know
15 there are any where from 30% to 60% state and
16 countrywide. So we have excellent recidivism
17 rate. Over 85% of the women we serve do
18 transition right into jobs as well as between 90
19 and 95% move directly into permanent supportive
20 housing.

21 We will be working on this project
22 with another non-profit, well known in the city,
23 Community Access. Community Access has a 36 year
24 track record and have currently I believe over 800
25 units of supportive permanent housing and they

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2 would be partnering with Providence House, helping
3 us with the property management services of this
4 building. Thank you.

5 MS. CLARK: Do you have any
6 questions?

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Just a couple,
8 what is the AMI on the affordable units? You
9 mentioned low income.

10 JACK HAMMER: Okay the SOP
11 [phonetic] AMI level is 60% AMI.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And with regard
13 to the supportive housing programs, I'm a big
14 believer in supportive housing in the city of New
15 York. Are you partnering with any other not for
16 profits in terms of providing job training
17 programs or job readiness programs or other ways
18 to help these individuals get back into the
19 community?

20 SISTER KINNEY: Absolutely.
21 Because we have been working, you know, in this
22 field for 31 years we have a number of linkages
23 with other organizations that particularly work
24 with this population. To include the Doe
25 Foundation, HOPE, numerous ones in the community

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2 who we will be working very closely to help them
3 find jobs.

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CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And do we have
anyone lined up to, for the community facility.
Do we know how that's going to be used or to what
purpose?

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MR. HAMMER: A community facility
is simply the zoning classification of the
project.

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CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Do any of the
other members, oh I'm sorry, I didn't introduce
everybody. Excuse me, I'm sorry about that. We
were in a rush to get started. Excuse me. So to
my far right, is council member Charles Barron, to
his left is council member Sara Gonzalez. Charles
Barron of Brooklyn, council member Sara Gonzalez
to his left of Brooklyn. To her left, council
member Inez Dickens of Manhattan and to my left,
council member Peter Koo of Queens so it's kind of
opposite day here at Planning Dispositions
Concessions Committee. Does anyone have any
further questions regarding these two Land Use
items?

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And council member Vann has

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2 indicated his support, correct?

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MS. CLARK: Yes, he has and he has also allocated \$500,000 in Reso. A funds to the project.

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Seeing no questions, I call the hearing on this matter to a close. Thank you very much. Thank you, Sister.

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SISTER KINNEY: Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Up next we have Land Use number 8320105554HAX 2023 Belmont Avenue in the Bronx. This is a tenant interim lease program in Community Board 6 of the Bronx, council district 15, it's the council district of council member Joel Rivera. Here testifying on this item is Assistant Commissioner Carol Clark and Victor Hernandez of HPD.

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MS. CLARK: Right, Victor's the Director of the TIL and 7a programs. LU 83 consists of the proposed disposition of one occupied city owned building located as you noted at 2023 Belmont Avenue through HPD's tenant interim lease program which we call TIL. TIL assists organized tenant associations in city owned buildings to purchase and manage low income

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2 cooperatives. This project consists of 28
3 residential units. Council member Rivera has
4 indicated his approval.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mr. Hernandez,
6 would you like to add anything? Does anyone else
7 have any questions? How long has the preparation
8 for this building to be in the TIL program?

9 VICTOR HERNANDEZ: I don't know the
10 exact year but this project was special because it
11 was two buildings behind one another so we had to,
12 we relocated all the tenants to 2024 Hughes, I
13 mean to 2023 Belmont and we completed 2024 Hughes
14 then we moved all the tenants to the other
15 building and we did a lot split so it took about
16 five years and now both buildings are done. The
17 first building's already in HDFC and this one's
18 getting ready to become one now.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And the tenants
20 are excited to be moving back?

21 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yes, they are.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Very good.
23 Thank you. Well I have no further questions on
24 this item. Does anybody have any questions?

25 Thank you very much. I call the

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2 hearing on this matter to a close and we'll be
3 moving on to Land Use number 85 that's 20105556HAM
4 30 West 119th Street in Manhattan tenant interim
5 release program as well. That is in Community
6 Board district 10 and council district 9 that is
7 the council district represented by council member
8 Inez Dickens. Ms. Clark?

9 MS. CLARK: Yes, thank you. LU 85
10 consists of the proposed disposition of one
11 occupied city owned building located as you noted
12 at 30 West 119th Street through HPD's tenant
13 interim release or TIL program. TIL assists
14 organized tenant associations in city owned
15 buildings to purchase and manage low income
16 cooperatives. This project consists of four
17 residential units. Council member Dickens has
18 indicated her approval. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Council member
20 Dickens, do you have anything to add? I would
21 like to call Mr. Collins who is a resident and
22 represents the Spirits of Fire Tenant Association.
23 Mr. Collins?

24 EVANS COLLINS: Yes, good
25 afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mr. Collins,
3 can you introduce yourself please?

4 MR. COLLINS: My name is Evans
5 Collins of the 30 West 119th Street Spirits of Fire
6 Tenants Association. I just want to say that I
7 never thought that I would be appearing here
8 before such a distinguished panel nine years ago
9 when we first came to this program and we are very
10 very satisfied with the work which was done by the
11 city under the direction of Victor Hernandez and
12 his workers.

13 So, actually the only thing that I
14 do have to request is, seeing as how our building
15 is a landmark building that we be given the
16 permission to put a gate on the front of the
17 entrance leading into the sub basement because you
18 know we need permission to do that seeing as how
19 it is a landmark building but that's it.

20 Everything else from the roof to the sub basement
21 is superb, the work was done. It was very good.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Mr.
23 Collins. Do you have anything to add, council
24 woman Dickens?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you

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M. Chairman. Yes, the building is a very small building and my staff did a walk through with the residents. I thank Mr. Collins for coming here today, taking the time to come here. Yes, there is a concern because that ground level unit does require a security gate and Landmark application has to be done and I'm working with HPD in order to try to facilitate that a security gate is installed because of the landmark status but because of security it is necessary.

But the residents are pleased and ready to return to their building and move forward with the ownership. It is part of the Mountain Morris Park historic district and as a result it is in a district called Doctors Row and is home to several wonderful unaltered streetscapes, a Romanesque revival, Queen Anne and the gilded age architecture, Council member Barron.

I want to thank HPD for being mindful of the landmark status during the work that was done on this building's renovation. The building does not have any commercial space and because it is a small building, it's critical for the future success that the residents are vigilant

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2 about the timely payment of maintenance fees and
3 other assessments. I'm a strong believer that in
4 order to keep your community we must begin to
5 learn to own our community in an affordable
6 manner. That's the only way it can be done. And
7 as such, once we own, we have to be diligent and
8 vigilant that we don't get behind, particularly in
9 such a small building. And I urge you to find a
10 suitable occupant that has a like-mindedness that
11 will work with you, all of you for the vacant
12 unit.

13 With saying all of that, I
14 congratulate all of you for being diligent,
15 working hard. It's sometimes difficult because
16 I'm fighting with the HPD all the time and
17 sometimes they push back on me on these ownership
18 buildings but I will always fight for my community
19 to begin to own our community. I thank my Chair
20 for the time. I urge all of my colleagues to vote
21 in the affirmative. Thank you.

22 MR. COLLINS: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you
24 council member Dickens. Here, here to that and
25 thank you very much Mr. Collins for coming down

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2 and testifying and making your feelings known to
3 the council and to this committee. We really
4 really appreciate it. And we second, we like Mr.
5 Hernandez as well.

6 MR. COLLINS: Well, he's a hard
7 worker.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Well, thank you
9 very much and best of luck to you and your
10 neighbors. Thank you.

11 The hearing on this matter, any
12 other questions? The hearing on this matter is
13 now closed. Move on to Land Use number 104, that
14 is 20105622HAX that's 1434-8 Morris Avenue in the
15 Bronx, a low income rental in Community Board
16 District 4, council district 16. That's the
17 council district represented by Helen Diane
18 Foster. Here testifying on this item, Assistant
19 Commissioner at HPD, Carol Clark and Ted
20 Weinstein, the Director of Bronx Planning. Ms.
21 Clark?

22 I've actually asked Ted Weinstein
23 to give the testimony on this item today. In May
24 2007, the council approved the ULURP and UDAP
25 application for this site for the development of a

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2 21 unit building, 20 residential plus a super
3 which was intended to be a condominium building at
4 that time. Ultimately the developer had
5 difficulty obtaining financing, private financing
6 and so the project was switched to be a rental and
7 so we needed to come back to have the council
8 reapprove the project, this time as a rental. And
9 council woman Foster has been briefed and has
10 approval of the project.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And, so this is
12 a brand new development then?

13 MR. WEINSTEIN: They'll be new
14 construction there.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: New
16 construction. Is the, how many stories is the new
17 construction? Just out of curiosity.

18 MR. WEINSTEIN: Probably, I'm
19 guessing the stories would be five or six
20 residential.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And then with
22 the rental income guidelines, what is the price
23 index?

24 MR. WEINSTEIN: The maximum income
25 would be 60% AMI.

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Do any of my
3 colleagues have any—none? Seeing none, the hearing
4 on this matter is closed. Thank you.

5 And we have one more item on the
6 agenda and that is preconsidered. Application
7 number 20105712HAK that is a New York State Office
8 of Mental Health Supportive Housing program. 33
9 units in community district 5 of Brooklyn, sorry,
10 441 Dewitt Avenue, 437 Dewitt Avenue, 435 Dewitt
11 Avenue, 433 Dewitt Avenue that is I council
12 district 42 of our esteemed colleague Charles
13 Barron. Here testifying on this item, Assistant
14 Commissioner Carol Clark, Jack Hammer, Director of
15 Brooklyn Planning and Steven Ald of Dewitt
16 Supportive Housing. Ms. Clark?

17 MS. CLARK: Yes, this item consists
18 of the proposed amendment of a project known as
19 Dewitt Avenue Residence and located at 433-441
20 Dewitt Avenue under the New York State Office of
21 Mental Health Supportive Housing Program. The
22 original project approved by the council in August
23 of 2005 consisted of the proposed disposition of
24 four vacant city owned lots to the sponsor,
25 Professional Services Center for the Handicapped,

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2 known as PSCH.

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The proposed amendment consists of the disposition to a new sponsor, Dewitt Supportive Housing LP which will construct one building with 33 residential units. 25 of them will be available for individuals with a history of mental illness. The remaining eight will be for low income persons who are not in a special needs category. All of the units will be affordable to individuals earning up to 60% of the area median income and PSCH will provide requisite social services to the building. We've worked very closely with council member Barron on this item. He's reviewed the project and he has indicated his support. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I will defer my questions to council member Barron. Council member Barron?

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you very much. I just wanted to say that this was a very challenging project because in our community sometimes whether it's perception or reality, some communities feel that they have an overabundance of special housing needs or whether it's HIV/AIDS

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needs or homeless needs. But in this case, when we did the research that indeed we don't have a lot of these facilities in our district. I think there may be one or two others in the district. And then the other thing and as honesty compels me to say but for the grace of God, it could be one of us in need of these kinds of facilities and yet sometimes communities, when they think mental health, you know the stigma, because I do honestly feel that many of my colleagues need to be in treatment and they just refused, they refused to take my suggestion but I think this is a very important project for our community.

And I have to say and highly comment Ms. Caroline Washington, known by some of us as Peggy Washington. Stand up, Peggy. I think she did a great job in working with our community because I had to talk to some of the preachers, the pastors right next to this facility is going to be a church and we had to go through a lot of discussion with the pastors and Mr. Scott also did a good job just working with us to work out all of the issues in there. So it is with pleasure with honor that we do highly recommend a positive vote

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2 for this project in our community and we're
3 looking forward to a fine development and a fine
4 healing process for those who are in need of
5 special needs housing.

6 MS. CLARK: Thank you very much,
7 council member Barron.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Any other
9 questions or statements? I just want to commend
10 you and also commend you council member Barron. I
11 think it's very important in a year of very
12 austere budgets both in the state and the city,
13 this is a good thing we're getting these units
14 online to provide services to those that need it
15 in the city of New York.

16 So seeing no other questions, the
17 hearing on this matter is hereby closed. Those
18 are all the items for today's hearing. I will, I
19 recommend and I vote on all items and I will ask
20 council Carol Shine to call the roll.

21 MS. SHINE: Chair Levin.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Aye.

23 MS. SHINE: Council member Barron.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Aye on all.

25 MS. SHINE: Council member

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Gonzalez.

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COUNCIL GONZALEZ: Aye on all.

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MS. SHINE: Council member Dickens.

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COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Aye on

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all.

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MS. SHINE: Council member Koo.

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COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Aye on all.

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MS. SHINE: By a vote of five in

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the affirmative, none in the negative and no

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abstentions, the aforementioned items are approved

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and referred to the full committee.

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CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you Ms.

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Shine and since everybody is here today, this

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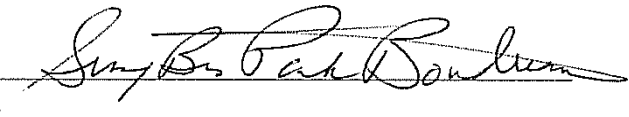
meeting is adjourned.

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[gavel bangs]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Sung Bin Park-Boudreau certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature _____  _____

Date June 3, 2010